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ABSTRACT

It is possible to measure the impact of culture on education in the ways in which students react to real life situations. Only through years of education is it possible to begin to perceive how creativity and aesthetic values affect the emotional development of the youth as a whole. Modern educational concepts need to be taught using traditional methods that have in them aesthetic qualities and a message to communicate. The history of formal and nonformal education in India goes back several millennia. Education was totally merged into the cultural roots of the region. Such a mix is necessary today, as an understanding and respect of other cultures is only possible through a full awareness of one's own culture. Since there is an urgent need to link education and culture, there is a corresponding need to change preservice and inservice teacher education. Culture can be incorporated either through an integrated curriculum or as a separate discipline in teacher training. With little additional training, teachers become very aware of their role in teaching about culture. Schools should assist in such efforts through the use of printed and audiovisual educational materials that enhance teacher output. (SG)

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CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

"Cultural and intercultural aspects of education: a new responsibility for teachers"

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

"Cultural and Intercultural aspects of education: a new responsibility for teachers"

Introduction: This paper does not propose to present an academic study of the education systems prevalent today but relies on traditional beliefs and rituals that sensitise one to the cultural roots and how this sensitivity can be nurtured through the educational system.

The impact of Culture in education cannot be measured in percentages or marks obtained but in how the students react to real life situations. There is no immediate dramatic, visible change in the personality of the student, no statistics to justify that exposure to beauty in line, colour, form, sound and movement changes attitudes, behaviour and sharpens perceptions. It is through years of nurturing and allowing the seed in the young mind to take nourishment from the cultural environment and flower into adulthood, that slowly one begins to perceive how creativity and aesthetic values effect the emotional development of the youth as a whole. Cultural Education in schools is necessary for the benefit of larger sections of the society and not for a chosen few who can afford to take up the study of fine arts.

In this material world, education today, mainly aims at providing economic affluence in life. There is no place in the formal education for, say, sitting quietly with a piece of wet clay, waiting for it to take shape and form in the mind: or spend hours and days in preparation of the self to take up a brush to make the first line on the canvas. Where is the time to listen to the inner silence and to communicate with oneself? In the mad rush for "reaching" somewhere in this modern day world, when does one stop awhile for introspection - to feel the vibrations in the spaces around and within us - to hear the Cosmic sound that permeates all of life?

Culture and Education are two sides of the same coin. Here it is not necessary to go into semantics of the word but suffice it to say that Culture encompasses every facet of man's life.

"Culture" - its connotations and the images it bring to mind vary from Region to Region. Within each Region, one sees a grid formation; the verticality in time and horizontality in space. In space too - the levels where today, in a small district, say in India, one could witness the verticality showing life patterns of the B.C. era co-existing with the 20th century life styles. For an outsider this may be a hard factor to adjust to but, for the people living very harmoniously in a small region in various periods of time, this phenomena does not seem strange.

However, coming to the question of education: what aspect of "Culture" does one expect to be included in the "schooling"?

To my mind, as an artist and an educationist:

- A creative element is necessary
- The eternal values of truth, goodness and beauty that are generated through creativity are essential for the development of character
- Arts and Crafts as disciplines - yes, whenever possible
- But more important, the role of education should be to create an awareness of local cultural manifestations and integrate this awareness with curriculum subjects being taught in schools.

Education is complete in all aspects that is, when it has a strong culture base and improves the quality of life. True education whether in an institution or, at the home of a master where there is a one-to-one relationship; or in the community where one learns by association; has an element of refining the personality and inculcating values of working together for the benefit of the community.

The cultural needs should be the basis for formulating policies at all levels of decision making in every sector of development, whether it be education, health, housing or transport. In fact cultural education and awareness is the only foundation on which all future developmental activities can fruitfully be implemented. This is more relevant for the developing countries.

However, these are the Regions which are known to be culturally the richest. Their ancient traditions have survived through the ages and into the very fabric of the lives of the people are woven intricate, philosophical concepts and images based on centuries of evolution of aesthetics, values and creativity in thought and action.

An attitude towards the study of the environment both the natural and man-made has resulted in living in harmony with nature. The elements - water, air, fire, earth, which are essential for life have, in all cultures, been worshipped. Mountains, trees, animals, plants, rivers have been deified and these natural resources have inspired poets, musicians, sculptors, painters and dancers. To give one example, in many cultures, rivers emerging from the mountains flow through the plains before reaching the Sea or the Ocean. They provide sustenance and livelihood for many communities that live on the banks. Traditional communities recognised water as a source of life and treated it with love and care. Rivers were depicted in sculpture and painting by the artists. Great poets created beautiful verses and numerous songs and dances composed in praise of the rivers which were given a human form. It is evident that the ancients realised the necessity of clean water for survival and thus the river was not only a physical necessity but also a cultural need.

The love and concern for discovering the inner beauty and the striving for excellence in every act of life are some of the values that have nurtured the roots of the great tree of ancient cultures. Educators should today realise the role of education for fulfilment of the cultural needs of mankind. Into the syllabus should be woven the study of the environment and its influence on creativity should form part of formal and non-formal education.

The oral traditions, or, the non physical aspects of culture comprise the whole body of literary and performing traditions which are passed on by word of mouth even today. Studies from the epics of heroes, mythical figures are dramatised, sung, danced and narrated by traditional story tellers, geneolcgists and others and are even sculpted and painted on walls or scrolls. One can give numerous such examples of how knowledge is passed down from one generation to the other, each enriching and enhancing the tradition before passing it on to the next generation and, in the process, making it relevant to the contemporary scene.

Today, these traditional forms of communication should be used as aids to education in schools. Teachers need to learn the skills and techniques of these ancient audio-visual presentations where the story, for instance, on a painted scroll is being narrated, using elements of dance, drama and music in a highly refined and stylised manner for communication.

The modern concepts in education need to be taught by using traditional methods which have in them inherent aesthetic qualities and a message to communicate, usually based on social and moral values. These traditional media are region specific and are familiar to the child of the locality. Hence, teachers need to use these forms in schools for classroom teaching so as to emphasise that culture in education can be in tune with the traditions of the local region.

It may be pertinent to point out that, women have a major role as transmitters and disseminators of culture. They have taught moral and aesthetic values in the community. In the formal education and literacy campaigns, girls have lagged behind in many developing countries. This can be remedied if the women artisans and traditional performers are brought into the schools as instructors. Teachers should identify such women in their localities and bring them into the fold of the formal education system. This will also encourage girl students to attend schools where, due to social or cultural barriers they are not allowed to do so specially where there are only male teachers.

History: A study of the history of education in India of both the formal and the non-formal system goes back to several millennia. Long before the written word or a formal school system, as we know of today, came into India, education was imparted at various levels in Pathasalas which were attached to and patronised by temples,

monastries, churches and mosques or the house-holds of Kings and Nobles. There were also the Gurukulas, homes of great masters where students went to receive knowledge. They lived at the homes of the teachers for 10-12 years to master a single discipline.

Whether the student was preparing to learn the Vedas, Astronomy, Astrology, Philosophy or the Literary works; or learning the texts or Shastras pertaining to the martial arts for preparation to become a warrior or soldier; or was desirous of becoming a musician, dancer, painter or architect - he received formal training not only in his chosen area of specialization but he also mastered the ability to assimmilate, analyse, contribute to all aspects of life and became a fully productive contributing member of society. These Gurukulas (literary, meaning home of guru) were meeting places of the greatest minds -- scolars, thinkers and seers. However, to these Gurukulas only a few chosen students could gain entry, those who had a particular talent and were prepared to spend a number of years in the study of a particular subject devoting themselves fully to education away from the hum-drum of daily life. Many of them were children of Kings and Noblemen - the elite. Though it is also well known that the Gurukulas did not close their doors for the deserving intelligent students from other strata of society. It may be pertinent to mention that such institutions still exist.

Briefly it may be noted that this education was totally merged in the cultural roots of the region and therefore, there was no dichotomy in the cerebral and emotional development of the individual. The "Cultural" environment within the school was in harmony with the local geo-physical features and was sensitive to the needs of the community that it served.

At another level, education was and is still being imparted by the whole community beginning in the home by learning skills, and aesthetic values related to family trade or crafts. Sensitivity was being created to the variety of locally available materials such as clay, stone, wood, metal, plants and how to use these to create objects of beauty and utility.

We need not go into the details about the history of the modern education system introduced by the British in India. Suffice it to say that even though various Commissions and Reports on education highlighted the role of the mother tongue in education, familiarity with the natural and cultural environment, sensitivity towards art and culture, need of artists and craftsmen to be associated with the formal education, all these recommendations were not implemented due to ineffective teacher training.

After having gone through the completed questionnaires sent by many countries, I find that cultural education in the true sense is not being made available in many educational systems, the world over.

There can be no doubt in the minds of educationists, decision makers that just as it is imperative for emotional security to be aware of one's biological heritage, it is also as important, for the very same reason, to appreciate and be aware of the cultural heritage. An appreciation, understanding and respect of other cultures can only be possible when one is rooted in and fully aware of one's own culture.

Considering this important need, the role of education should therefore, be to provide to school students an opportunity to develop sensitivity and creativity through the learning of arts and crafts. This prepares the youth not only for participation in the cultural life, but it is a recognised fact by educationists that creative activities sharpen the intellect and lengthen the concentration span of the child thus improving all round standard in academics.

Teacher Training: Realising that no amount of Commissions and Reports on the improvement of education can be implemented unless the teacher has been trained and prepared to understand and recognise the need for changes in methodologies of teaching, the Post Independence era in India gave adequate weightage to the improvement of teacher training. Since there is an urgent requirement to link education with culture, the best way to achieve this is to make changes in existing preservice teacher training as far as possible and also train inservice teachers in this very sensitive area.

Input of culture in education can be in two formats:

1. An Integrated Cultural Component in Education
2. Cultural Education as a separate discipline

In either of these two cases the content of cultural education should include history, aesthetics and creative activities.

1. <u>An Integrated Cultural Component in Education</u>

a) **Theory:** In teaching of other disciplines such as science, social studies, mathematics and languages, cultural history can be made a part of the integrated curriculum, for example, while teaching social science the contributions of human beings, in creative

fields like music, literature, plastic arts, etc. can be highlighted in the historical and geographical perspective.

OR

While teaching science and mathematics, reference and illustrations can be given to exemplify the use of concepts and principles by artists and craftsmen.

While introducing a Cultural Component in School Disciplines, one should highlight for instance, geography, land formation, climate, flora and fauna which determines life style and the evolution of culture. The development of culture will be related to natural resources available for housing, food and for economic purposes. The economic structure and needs of the society will then determine not only division of labour but also religion, philosophy, music, dance, crafts and other art forms.

One example from India is given below:

History is taught in schools to enable students to understand how historical events effect life today. History is the story of the interaction of people of different religions and cultures. The coming of the Muslims and Christians to India have contributed to new concepts in philosophical thought, literature, music, dance, architecture and dress.

Students should know that Emperor Ashoka is not just a personality in the text book. A picture of the Lion Stamba or the Buddhist Dharmachakra, will enable the students to realise that Ashoka's artistic and political achievements have given us the emblem for the Republic of India and the wheel for the National Flag. The teachings of Buddha influenced the thoughts and actions of Mahatma Gandhi and many other twentieth century philosophers.

History is also the story of inventions of science, technology and mathematics that changed the life of people. The invention of the wheel made it possible to revolutionalize transport and today many machines use the principle of the rotating wheel.

History is also the record of how people adapted and changed their environment. It is the account of how languages and other modes of expression evolved. History is the narration of the changing economic patterns, technological inventions and philosophic ideas.

Economics describes the relationships between people within society, the occupation and social systems. Geo-physical features and history have contributed to economic patterns. Economic relationships determine what is important for the people, how they will live, what they will eat and wear.

Science and Mathematics are those branches of knowledge which have evolved through centuries and changed the culture of people. How different our lives would be without the knowledge of the zero, laws of gravity, the wheel, the sources of energy? Our knowledge of science and technology also determine the way we live, think and create.

Language is a means of communication, there are verbal and non-verbal means by which society expresses and understands itself. Technology, economics, geography, history can affect the growth of a language, a change in the cultural pattern will necessitate new words, thoughts and ideas. In the desert lands there may be numerous words for desert sands and winds, which do not exist in other land areas. The invention of telecommunication systems have changed our vocabulary and thoughts and ideas can be communicated over great distances within seconds. There are almost as many languages as there are geographical regions and cultures. The history of languages, poetry, drama and literature must be understood in the context of all the disciplines in order to appreciate the beauty and richness.

The relationship between culture of people and branches of knowledge have been described to prove that no subject can really be interesting or relevant in isolation. To create an interest and love for knowledge, school disciplines must relate to life in the community.

Practical work: Another important aspect of the teaching learning process of education is the practical use of knowledge through creative activities. In learning, for example, a language, the students need ample opportunity for expression. Creative practical activities can be designed to develop language, mathematical, scientific and thinking skills. In all disciplines practical work that combines creativity, knowledge of facts and expression can make learning more lasting and relevant. Easy to learn crafts, educational tours for study of the natural and cultural heritage should form part of normal school timetable.

2. Cultural Education as a separate discipline

Resent research in education and psychology have revealed the importance of cultural education in the development of the child's cognitive and emotional life. It has been observed that cognitive thinking abilities are greatly enhanced by artistic and creative exercises and activities. Creative work must be provided to children or else they will turn destructive and counter-productive.

A knowledge of one's country, peoples and places is essential for development of a cultural national identity that is rooted and firm.

Cultural history also provides knowledge of human beings' most heightened perception, insight, understanding and creative ventures. The arts assist human beings in comprehending the meaning of Nature, so that society can live in harmony with it.

The syllabus for Cultural Education should include:

Cultural History:

- regional contextual and ecological factors
- rural and tribal contributions
- artistic manifestations (performing, plastic, literary arts, customs, rituals and religions)
- inter-relationship of history with other disciplines.

Related practical activities:

- learning local crafts
- principles of aesthetics and related literature

In order that teachers are able to take on the additional responsibility of introducing cultural education in schools, this vital subject needs re-examination in the following areas:

- Syllabus and Curriculum
- Inservice Teacher Training Programmes
- Educational materials related to this area for teachers and students.
- Review of Text Books in all disciplines.

Syllabus must be region specific:

An important aspect of cultural education is that, especially in the formative years (Primary and Middle), emphasis should be given to the culture of the region that is familiar to the students, as it were like their mother tongue. Music, Dance and expression in the plastic arts have grown out of an intricate subtle relationship with the natural and special environment of a given place. Students growing up in one region need first to understand their own culture, its uniqueness and appreciate the contributions made to enriching other cultures. The concept of many rivers bringing mineral wealth of the lands to the mighty ocean may be used to guide the development of a syllabus for cultural education in schools.

Curriculum Development:

The planning and designing of the curriculum, must be at the State, regional level and further sub-divisions should be encouraged for different communities i.e., tribal, rural, urban, religious groups, etc. The diversity and rich cultural identity of communities must be developed at all cost. Uniform syllabus structures and blue prints should be avoided as they have proved to the cultural fabric of countries.

The curriculum to be developed for schools in cultural education must be one that lays equal emphasis on theory (cultural history) and practice (creative activities). Creative work in fields of music, dance, literature, drama, plastic arts are essential to cultivate the inherent talents of different children and to apply theory to action and to capture the educational experience of creative constructive enterprise.

For teachers to take on the new responsibility, a cultural component in teacher education is essential. Cultural education as a component must be included in all theory papers related to psychology, educational philosophy, history and sociology of education. To these disciplines must be added the new research findings that highlight the educational value of cultural education.

Teaching the discipline "Cultural Education" and preparation of teaching materials:

Teacher trainees must be taught -

- how to study local cultural resources to be incorporated in the school curriculum
- use of audio-visual aids

- development of lesson plans that incorporate use of cultural manifestations for educational purposes
- practical, creative activities for teaching
- background, history and knowledge of culture and artistic heritage of the country.

Review of Text Books

Cultural values are also transferred through text books and other educational materials. Regular reviews should be conducted of Text Books to ensure that cultural values are represented. Knowledge of cultural history can therefore, be incorporated as examples, illustrations and as projects for creative activities in the text books of science, mathematics, social studies and languages.

The role of education in contributing an awareness of culture has recognised the need for using **Museums and Historical sites as centres of learning.** At many periods in the evolution of education, scholars have reflected that museums play an important part in the education of school children as they bring home to think much more vividly than any prosaic lectures and also supply background information on history and arts and other fields of learning.

It is the teachers' responsibility to familiarise students in understanding the contribution of various cultures to the disciplines of Science and Technology, Languages and Social Studies. Teachers ** must prepare themselves for educational tours to museums and monuments for the purpose of familiarising themselves and later on their students with the evolution of the arts of different regions, and also to study the continuity of artistic traditions in order to comprehend the latest development in the field of culture.

Inservice teacher training needs to include a study of art and culture and to relate this knowledge with other disciplines where creativity and innovative methodologies used by teachers involves students and teachers in the teaching and learning process. There is a need to break-down the four walls of the classroom and extend the learning area to historical monuments, museums, zoological parks and craft centres.

An appreciation of what is good in one's heritage and more important the ability to recognise the right from the wrong and the development of a sense of world citizenship are necessary for a complete education. True education also brings clarity of thought, compassion and concern for mankind and is a basis for Human Rights.

In today's teacher training and more so in inservice training, this aspect has to be included and intensive training given to teachers who work along with students to study art and culture of a period in museums and monuments and relate this knowledge to other disciplines where creativity and innovative methodologies used by

** Studying in museums also provides cultural linkages between nations and Regions and a first-hand source of exposure to the heritage of Mankind.

the teachers involve the students and teachers in the teaching and learning process.

Taking into account the recommendations made and what is being practised in many parts of the world, India has also broken down the four walls of the classroom, so to speak, and made educational visits to museums, historical sites, monuments, an essential part of education. It is after many centuries that today, the school is opening its doors and educationists are being more open minded about interacting with artists, craftsmen and cultural institutions other than just the academic staff of the school.

The training of teachers should reflect the need of different groups living in tribal and rural areas, special schools should be set up to cater to the demands of minority communities that are practising specific arts and crafts or those that are on the move for reasons of occupation or employment. Though one cannot fully be satisfied with the training in these areas, an attempt is now being made at the teacher education level which realises the importance of a teacher in the building of a society and hence caters to the needs of the diverse groups. Much needs to be done though a small beginning has been made in India in the field of inservice training. In such a large country what is being done is very inadequate as far as numbers are concerned. In India, Government schools have been provided for artisans, nomads, shepherds, minorities and girls. A very important factor in developing countries is the masses that come to cities in search of employment for construction of buildings, bridges, roads, etc. For this migrant group, non-governmental agencies consisting of volunteers have set up Mobile Creches where the children of working parents are looked after and provided education. These temporary schools move from one construction site to the other. Some government aid is also being provided for this.

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) set up in each district are training primary school teachers. This training, though based on a core curriculum takes into account the regional local needs and is now producing a body of teachers who, after training, work in the particular area to which they belong. Till many decades ago, teachers who had been trained in unviersities and far away places came to teach in these remote areas. These teachers obviously were not aware of the cultural and educational needs of the locality.

While recognising the need for preservice training, which is extremely important, India also has a substantial programme of cultural education for inservice training of educational personnel at all levels from nursery to teacher educators. This model has been successfully tried out with teachers of other countries by adding changes to suit the local needs.

The training aims at:

- creating an awareness of the fundamental principles underlying the development of culture;
- providing an opportunity to formulate methodologies in which aspects of culture and creative activities constitute an integral part of the process of learning and teaching;
- providing teachers an occasion to interact with scholars and artists in order to devise ways of making education a total experience;
- providing skills and training in creative activities in order to improve classroom teaching techniques;
- providing teachers from all parts of the country an opportunity to work together towards national understanding.

The content of inservice teacher training specially in the new field of cultural education, depending on the level of the personnel to be trained, is broadly classified into four categories:

(i) Theoretical Study of Art and Culture
(ii) Practical training in Arts & Crafts
(iii) Preparation of educational aids for cultural education and to support classroom teaching
(iv) Educational tours to Museums and Monuments.

The Unesco has been strongly supporting the training of Cultural Administrators and in India, a Draft Training Programme for High Level Decision Makers in the Cultural Dimensions of their Tasks was submitted in September, 1990. The follow-up of this was a Working Group Meeting for Training of Cultural Administrators in the Asian Region, in which three modules of training were prepared. It was highly recommended at this Meeting that priority should be given to training of Administrators of the education sector.

Research: Universities in India that are responsible for teacher education have conducted substantial research in pedagogy but, there is not any specific research undertaken in aspects of culture in Education. Research being conducted in other disciplines touch upon this topic.

Apart from this, Universities with teacher training departments are conducting research in teacher education viable for the diversity of ethnic communities. Valuable information is available in research projects conducted in departments of Anthropology, Sociology, Fine Arts, Philosophy, to name a few.

Multi cultural Education: In the field of **Inter cultural education** right from school level till teacher education beginning in schools with cultures of neighbouring countries and in geography to some extent of the whole world and in Universities and teacher education dealing with specific cultures either in studies of History, Religions, Literature, cultures of other countries form part of the curriculum.

The Cultural Exchange Programme between countries has also proved beneficial for an Inter cultural understanding. There are exchanges of students, teachers and artists in the SAARC countries (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Bhutan, Maldives). Beginning with this small network from South Asia this cultural exchange between educationists and artists at all levels of education and creativity covers the whole Region of Asia and practically all countries of the world.

It is a very encouraging trend in **multi cultural education**, that now teachers and teacher educators from the UK and USA are coming to India and the Centre for Cultural Resources & Training, New Delhi is organising the academic programme for them which includes a study of ancient and contemporary India covering areas dealing with art and culture, economics, politics, law and justice and science and technology. These **exchanges of the teaching community have largely been responsible for removing the stereotype images** that one has of different cultures and provides true information and understanding through first-hand experiences. Such exchanges need to be strengthened.

Media in Education: Considering the impact of the electronic media such as, TV, Films on the viewers, a heavy responsibility rests with producers of programmes. While educational TV programmes exist and have been useful as aids for teaching and learning, one is not happy with the general standard of such programmes being telecast. Apart from negating much of what is being taught such as aesthetics, moral and ethical values, these programmes in many cases provide very poor quality audio visual material and do not help in creating a sensitivity in the young audience towards art and culture.

In Conclusion

"Responsibility of teachers"

The educational systems should take on the responsibility to produce better teachers. Educational planners, decision makers, policy makers in the field of education should attempt to provide - better training, better status, more respect for them. Then give them a policy guideline and make them responsible for implementing it. India spends 5 years for the initial training of dectors, lawyers, engineers and other professionals, but how is it that after schooling, just 9 months training is given to produce a primary school teacher from whom society expects so much?

When the teacher has received proper training and is given freedom to implement the guidelines provided for education, then the responsibility of good education, that which includes aspects of culture, the inter-disciplinary and integrated approach is to be borne by the teacher.

It is the shared responsibility of the whole structure of administration consisting of the decision makers, Principals, Teachers to improve the quality of education being provided in schools.

There are some voices raised against giving additional responsibility to teachers as disseminators of culture, but in view of my long experience of working with inservice teachers and training them in a variety of methodologies to incorporate cultural and aesthetic values in curriculum teaching, I can say with some authority that teachers, when given indepth training over a period of time (not Workshops of 2-3 days) become very aware of their new role and are willing to take on the responsibility of teaching about culture. This whole process of creative and innovative teaching enthuses the teachers as they also find an opportunity to discover within themselves their hidden talents hitherto unknown.

However, it may be pertinent to add that educational materials both printed and audio visual aids should be provided to schools after training the teachers to enhance and enrich the quality of output of the teachers. These materials also make the integration of culture in classroom teaching easier for the already over-burdened teachers. Even if only a few materials are provided, however, insufficient, the success of using these in creating an interest amongst students inspires school authorities to produce additional texts & visuals and even purchase relevant books for their libraries.